

What is claimed is:

1 Jul 1. A method of processing an electronic document corresponding to a hardcopy of the
2 2017 document, comprising the steps of:

3 placing a mark on the hardcopy, the mark containing identification information of
4 the electronic document;

5 viewing the hardcopy by an image capture device to capture an image of the
6 hardcopy document;

7 decoding the mark from the image captured by the image capture device to
8 determine identification information of the electronic document; and

9 processing the electronic document according to the identification information.

1 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of viewing the hardcopy is
2 performed by moving a copy of the hardcopy in front of the image capture device.

1 3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark on the
2 500 C17 hardcopy is performed by creating the mark at the time of creation of the electronic
3 document and wherein the hardcopy, with the mark, is printed from the electronic
4 document.

1 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark is performed
2 500 C17 by a printer that prints the digital mark on the hardcopy document.

1 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark is performed
2 500 C17 by a copying the hardcopy having a mark to create another hardcopy with the mark.

1 6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the mark is a bar code.

1 7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the mark is a two dimensional bar code.

1 8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes retrieving the document for viewing.

1 9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes the step of mailing the document by electronic mail.

1 10. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes the step of the printing the document.

1 11. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes the step of making a copy of the electronic document.

1 12. The method according to claim 1, wherein the mark is machine readable code
2 formed on a substrate on which the hardcopy is printed.

1 13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the machine readable code is formed
2 using font pattern modification including one of a half-tone screen, inter-character spacing
3 modification, and dithering patterns.

1 14. The method according to claim 12, wherein the machine readable code is formed on
2 a particular location in the hardcopy document.

1 15. The method according to claim 1, wherein the mark is a digital mark.

1 16. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark is performed
2 by a printing press that prints the mark during bulk printing.

1 17. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the electronic
2 document includes invoking a software application to process the electronic document.

1 18. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the electronic
2 document includes identifying and processing based on any intellectual property rights
3 associated with the hardcopy documents.

1 19. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the electronic
2 document includes calculating and allocating revenues or costs associated with the hardcopy
3 document.

Sub 203 20. A system for processing an electronic document corresponding to a hardcopy of the
2 electronic document, the system comprising:

3 a data storage device that stores the electronic document;

4 a mark encoder that encodes a mark on the hardcopy;

5 an image capture device that captures an image of the hardcopy including the mark;
6 a decoder, operatively connected to the image capture device, for decoding
7 document identification information from the mark from the image captured by the image
8 capture device; and
9 a processing unit, connected to the decoder and the data storage device, that
10 processes the electronic document in accordance with the decoded document identification
11 information.

15b 21. The system according to claim 20, wherein the processing unit processes the
2c electronic document by one of sending by electronic mail, printing, or copying of the
3 electronic document.

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